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GEORGE HALSEY/WILLIAMSBURG

THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMICS

ANNCR:

PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION MEETING IN WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA ARE DEMONSTRATING ONCE AGAIN THAT ECONOMIC AFFAIRS ARE BECOMING A DOMINANT FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. FROM WILLIAMSBURG, VOA'S NEWS ANALYST GEORGE HALSEY HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS.

VOICE:

THER ARE FIVE COMMITTEES IN THIS NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY -- ONLY ONE OF THEM IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED WITH ECONOMICS. BUT ALL FIVE, INCLUDING THE MILITARY, SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL COMMITTEES REFER TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THEIR REPORTS TO THE ASSEMBLY. THIS IS PERHAPS A MEASURE OF HOW IMPORTANT ECONOMIC AFFAIRS ARE TO ALMOST INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY.

ANOTHER MEASURE IS THAT IN THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE'S REPORT IS A LIST OF THIRTY-FIVE ABBREVIATIONS. ALL BUT FOUR OF WHICH STAND FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.

THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE'S TWENTY-SEVEN PAGE REPORT RANGES FAR BEYOND THE GEOGRAPHIC CONFINES OF THE FIFTEEN NATO MEMBERS. IT SAYS THAT THE WOPLDWIDE RECESSION IS BEING OVERCOME BUT SLOWLY. IT DISCUSSES THE PROS AND CONS OF A FLOOR PRICE FOR COMMODITIES AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE. IT SAYS THAT THE SURPLUS OF DOLLARS IN OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES IS RISING AGAIN AND POINTS OUT THE PROBLEMS THIS CREATES.

THE REPORT HAS A GLOOMY VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT AID, SAYING IT IS BARELY SCRATCHING THE SURFACE OF NEED. IT SAYS THAT WHAT'S NEEDED IS INCREASED CONCESSIONAL AID FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT, AND TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

POLICIES REALISTICALLY RELATED TO IMPROVED EXPORT POTENTIALS. AND IT DISCUSSES THE PROBLEM OF INCREASING DEBT POINTING OUT THAT SENTIMENT FOR CANCELLATION OF DEBTS APPEARS TO BE WANING SOMEWHAT AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS THEY REALIZE THE IMPACT THIS COULD HAVE ON OBTAINING FUTURE LOANS AND CREDIT.

(OPT) THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE REPORT ALSO DEALS IN DETAIL WITH ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS AND ALL THE VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL FORUMS WITH MONETARY REFORM AND WITH MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS. OUT OF THIS COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF WORLD ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, THE COMMITTEE CONCLUDED THAT WHAT THE NATO COUNTRIES NEED IS A COMMON APPROACH TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. (END OPT)

THAT'S THE ESSENCE OF THREE RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE FULL ASSEMBLY. THE DELEGATES FINALLY AGREED TO THE THREE ALTHOUGH NOT WITH COMPLETE UNANIMITY. AND THEY'LL GO BACK THEIR OWN PARLIAMENTS TO SEE WHAT THEY CAN DO. THE MAJOR CONCERNS ARE A COMMON NATO POLICY ON THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER, CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BASED ON THAT COMMON POLICY, OPPOSITION TO THE IDEA OF FIXED FLOOR PRICES FOR RAW MATERIALS, BUT CREATION OF SOME SORT OF SCHEME THAT WOULD EFFECTIVELY STABILIZE EXPORT EARNINGS SO THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES CAN HAVE TIME TO DIVERSIFY THEIR ECONOMIES. THE ASSEMBLY ALSO WANTS A CAREFUL STUDY OF THE ORIGINS OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC RECESSION AND REGULAR ECONOMIC SUMMIT MEETINGS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE TO IMPROVE COOPERATION.

THE DEMOCRACIES THAT MAKE UP THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION TEND TO MOVE SLOWLY. IT TAKES TIME TO REACH A CONSENSUS -- WITHIN EACH COUNTRY AND WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. THE INTENSE, SOMETIMES VEHEMENT, DEBATE HERE IN THIS NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY IS ONE OF THE STEPS TOWARD CONSENSUS.

JS/PBM